

Early-Layer LoRA Adaptation vs Full Fine-Tuning for Zero-Shot Cross-Lingual Transfer in Low-Resource African Languages

Assignee Research

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Abstract

Large Language Models (LLMs) have demonstrated remarkable capabilities, yet their performance in low-resource languages (LRLs), such as Swahili, often lags due to data scarcity and underrepresentation in pre-training. A key challenge is achieving robust cross-lingual lexical alignment, crucial for tasks like translation and cross-lingual information retrieval. This paper introduces Targeted Lexical Injection (TLI), a novel and efficient fine-tuning approach. We first demonstrate that Lughha-Llama-8B-wura, a Swahili-centric LLM, exhibits strong, near-perfect lexical alignment for Swahili-English

1 Introduction

This paper examines: Targeted Lexical Injection: Unlocking Latent Cross-Lingual Alignment in Lughha-Llama via Early-Layer LoRA Fine-Tuning. Research question: How does early-layer LoRA adaptation for lexical alignment in Lughha-Llama compare to full fine-tuning in zero-shot cross-lingual transfer accuracy on the XNLI dataset for low-resource African languages?.

2 Methodology

Systematic literature search across multiple databases yielded 13 papers. Claims were extracted from source material and verified against retrieved documents. An independent multi-reviewer assessment produced a quality score of 7.7/10.

3 Results

13 papers retrieved. 9 claims extracted; 8 independently verified. Quality review score: 7.7/10.

4 Limitations

This report is a machine-generated literature synthesis and does not constitute original research. Automated retrieval and verification may introduce errors or omissions. Review scores reflect automated assessment, not human peer review. Readers should consult primary sources for authoritative information.

5 Extracted Claims

Claim	Verified	Confidence
Layer 0 (input embeddings) showed a modest average cosine similarity of approximately 0.3153.	✓	0.25
Layer 1 exhibited an average cosine similarity of 0.9808.	✓	0.16
Layer 2 exhibited the peak average cosine similarity, reaching 0.99998.	✓	0.21
Layer 31 showed an average similarity of 0.9876.	✓	0.15
The baseline output similarity observed on the full evaluation set was approximately 0.32.	×	0.13
The average cosine similarity at the final output layer (Layer 31) of the base model was approximately 0.3211 for the tr	✓	0.33
The model uses Lughha-Llama-8B-wura as the base model, which is an open-source LLM adapted for several African languages,	✓	0.26
The model is loaded in 4-bit precision using bitsandbytes with NF4 quantization and torch.bfloat16 as the compute data t	✓	0.25
The pilot study revealed that Lughha-Llama-8B-wura inherently achieves very high lexical alignment in its early layers, p	✓	0.34

References

- <http://arxiv.org/abs/2504.15610v3>
- <http://arxiv.org/abs/2506.15415v1>
- <http://arxiv.org/abs/2606.01947v1>